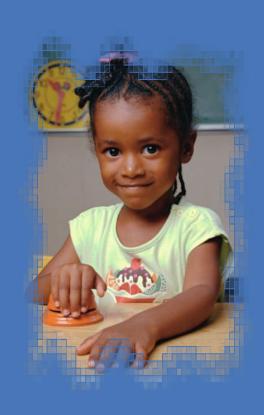
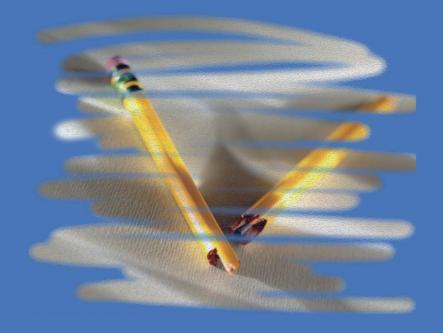
Florida's



COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Policy Analysis





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Florida's Common Core Standards

Policy Analysis



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Florida's Common Core Standards

Policy Analysis

PREFACE

This analysis of Florida's Common Core system of standards, assessments and data collection, though not exhaustive, is comprehensive in seven key areas addressing the concerns of parents, students, educators, and legislators. Questions such as the following have arisen: 1) Are these standards led by the federal government or state governments? 2) Are they voluntary or government-mandated? 3) What is the extent of the data that will be collected on students and teachers, who stores it, and what is the purpose of it? These questions and many more will be answered through this carefully documented and constructed policy analysis of the Common Core standards. This analysis has been compiled, vetted, and it is being distributed by a consortium of over 50 nonpartisan state and national organizations that are addressing issues and concerns with the Common Core standards. The analysis has identified seven areas of the Common Core standards that are problematic to a free society.

Basis of Report

"Florida's Common Core standards Policy Analysis" has been carefully researched with footnoted sources, while being reviewed by professionals including; PhDs in education, MDs in pediatrics, child development experts, professional lobbyists, and attorneys. Organizations such as Eagle Forum, The CATO Institute, Heritage Foundation, Wall Builders, Republican National Committee, Freedom Works, Heartland Research, Education Liberty Watch, Home School Legal Defense Association, The American Family Association, Florida Parent Educators Association, local teachers' unions as well as numerous other organizations at the state and national levels have identified problematic areas within the Common Core standards system.

Executive Summary

About Common Core

The Common Core Standards Initiative is a set of National K-12 standards were developed by a nonprofit called Achieve, Inc., based in Washington, D.C., the National Governors Association (80% of the funding comes from the federal government), and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Common Core was introduced and implemented in Florida, along with many other states, without legislative approval and minimal public engagement. Their creation was neither grassroots nor did they emanate from the states. These standards are initially in English language arts and math. However, proponents, including the federal government, have plans for national standards in all subjects.

Loss of State and Local Control

Common Core proponents claim the standards are being implemented on a voluntary basis. However, many state and local governments "voluntarily" chose to adopt the standards because the state and local governments are being coerced by the federal government through financial contingencies. In addition, states had little or no part in developing the standards, which are now copyrighted, and were encouraged to adopt the standards before they were completely written. Local governments will lose control almost entirely. Local school board members say they are being required to apply these "national educational policies" that are supposedly "state-led" and "voluntary;" and, because these standards were created at the top, state autonomy is being severely diminished.

Psychological Manipulation and Data Mining

The Common Core standards, along with the aligned curriculum and the mining of nearly 400 data points reveal that the goal of the standards is not simply to improve academic achievement but also to instill federally determined attitudes and mindsets in students including political and religious beliefs. According to the US Department of Education, this will be carefully regulated through the extensive data-mining of both students and teachers using devices such as "facial expression cameras," "posture analysis seats," "a pressure mouse," and "wireless skin conductance sensors" as well as the use of the actual assessments. The federal government asserts that to secure their definition of improving the quality of education, a student's right to privacy may be sacrificed.

Academic Quality, Rigor, and International Benchmarking

Though Common Core proponents claim that, by implementing the standards, students will graduate better equipped to compete in the global marketplace, research reveals that the standards are academically of lower quality than current state standards. In fact, a study performed by the Fordham Institute suggests that the Common Core math standards are inferior to Florida's current standards. The creative and academic development of students has been diminished using the Common Core standards. No proof has ever been provided that Common Core standards were ever internationally benchmarked, though the proponents continually make this claim.

The Effect on Parental Rights and Autonomy

Local and state governments will not be the only ones forfeiting power to the federal government. Parents will lose the right to oversee their child's development – making the government the primary parental figure. The government will have standard beliefs that it will require every child to be taught, regardless of their background or family's values.

The Effect on Teachers and the Teaching Profession

Heavy government intrusion already exists in the teaching profession. Teachers already must find a sensitive balance between meeting required government stipulations and meeting the specific needs of each child in his/her classroom. Federal government intrusion only intensifies the problem. Teachers will be given a "cookie-cutter" set of directives and expected to make each child come out with the same philosophy and academic experience, despite the fact that each child is unique. The stringent requirements of Common Core and its test-based standards will make it extremely difficult for teachers to adapt to their classroom needs and, in the end, will make many students good test-takers instead of thoughtfully educated individuals – a problem that already exists and will only exacerbated with Common Core implementation.

Another concern amongst educators is that the data-mining aspect of Common Core is not limited to students. Teachers themselves will also be data-mined which may suggest that those whose religious or political beliefs do not align with the government's standards could be terminated. Of course, proponents would say that would never occur and the purpose for the data is entirely different. However, it is noteworthy that everything would be in place for that kind of discrimination to occur which is another reason why this kind of centralized power is dangerous.

The Cost to Implement Common Core

The school system across the state is currently suffering from the economic stresses that plague the entire nation. So, when the federal government offers money in exchange for implementing one of their programs, it is like promising cold water to a vagabond in the desert in exchange for his shirt. It seems like a good deal at first - until there is no water and the sun starts beating down on a bare back. The federal government is already multi-trillions of dollars in debt. It does not have any money to offer. Therefore, in short, the entire system is based on an empty promise. Of course, the money the government does entertain, the government gets from each state's taxpayers. So, how much is this program going to cost taxpayers? \$1,024,163,000 is one estimate. Are the taxpayers of Florida willing to pay for another intrusive government program destined to fail?

The Effect on Private, Religious, and Home Schools

Contrary to some claims, Common Core will affect private, religious and home schools in several of the following ways:

- 1) According the Department of Education and Governor Rick Scott, their goal is to require private schools to adhere to the Common Core assessments in order to receive state vouchers.
- 2) Because college entrance exams will align with the standards, any graduates from non-compliant schools could be denied grant funding, student loans, and enrollment into public universities.
- 3) The cost to bring private and home schools in line with technology-based assessments without state and federal funding could make these alternative education sources no longer financially feasible.
- 4) Implementation allows for content to be taught that conflicts with the values and beliefs of many private and home schools.

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CHAPTER 1

Loss of State and Local Control

Common Core proponents continually try to portray the imposition of the standards, testing, and data collection scheme as a "voluntary," "state-led," and transparently public effort. In fact, Senator John Legg, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, made the following statement:

"The Common Core State Standards are the result of a state-led initiative (composed of 45 states) who came together to set foundational common standards. Together, with the review of educators, parents, and content experts, the states created standards that are aligned with college and work expectations; standards that are focused and consistent."

Despite the good senator's efforts to also portray this effort as constitutional and promoting state sovereignty, nothing could be further from the truth. Here are some reasons why:

- The states "voluntarily" adopted those standards because it was the only realistic way they could get relief from onerous federal regulations of No Child Left Behind or compete for desperately needed funds as part of the Race to the Top program during a severe recession. This program was merely an earmark in the huge Stimulus bill never debated or discussed in Congress. Having to submit to federal directives while competing to receive taxpayer funds forcibly taken from the states by the federal government is not a voluntary or 10th amendment process.
- The decisions to apply for Race to the Top² and to accept Common Core³ were timed while most legislatures were not in session and the decisions were most often made, as in the state of Florida, by appointed bureaucrats on the State Board of Education (SPOE) and the commissioner of education, instead of elected legislators or school board members. This is not "local control."
- States were required to adopt the standards verbatim. Many states did so before the standards were finished. The states could have added up to 15% of their own material but could not have deleted anything or made any amendments. This additional 15% will not be included on national tests developed by PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career) and SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium). In the fall of 2010, the department of education formally refused to take advantage of even this minimal opportunity for local control, adding nothing developed in Florida to the national standards.

¹ Legg: Common Core will better prepare Florida's students – Tampa Tribune 6/14/13 http://tbo.com/list/news-columns/legg-common-core-will-better-prepare-floridas-students-b82501165zl

² Race to the Top applications were available in November of 2009 with the deadline being in January of 2010. The Florida legislature was not in session enough to be involved in the decision.

³ The appointed Florida State Board of Education accepted the Common Core Standards in July of 2010, again when the legislature was not in session.

⁴ "States that adopt the proposed common academic standards must use the document word for word, initiative leaders said last week," as quoted from Catherine Gewertz – State School Boards Raise Questions About Standards – Education Week, 2/3/10, http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/02/03/21nasbe.h29.html?tkn=OZNFol%2Ft6zlZe2pu7eZpdMbwEbN2%2FcMaQxMj

- The standards are copyrighted by Achieve, The National Governor's Association, and the Council of Chief State School Officers who deny any responsibility or liability for their accuracy and demand that the standards must be used "for purposes that support the Common Core State Standards Initiative." ⁵
- These standards (or a university approved alternative) were also a key factor required for receiving waivers from No Child Left Behind; but, by that time, most states had already agreed to Common Core.⁶
- It was the Obama administration's plan to tie these standards to federal Title I funding as part of the No Child Left Behind reauthorization.⁷
- As pointed out by Neil McCluskey of the Cato Institute and, as early as 2008, there was a call for "federal
 tiered incentives" to implement these internationally benchmarked national standards, as described in this
 analysis, by the same three organizations that developed the Common Core standards which hardly paints
 the picture of a state-led initiative:

"As states reach important milestones on the way toward building internationally competitive education systems, the federal government should offer a range of tiered incentives to make the next stage of the journey easier, including increased flexibility in the use of federal funds and in meeting federal educational requirements and providing more resources to implement world-class educational best practices. Over the long term, the federal government will need to update laws to align national education policies with lessons learned from state benchmarking efforts and from federally funded research." (Emphasis added.)

The phrases "national education policies" and "state-led, voluntary standards" are not logically compatible.

Despite declarations to the contrary, the standards development and adoption processes were far from transparent and state-led.

- The three groups that developed the standards, Achieve, The National Governor's Association, and The Council of Chief State School Officers, are private, unaccountable trade associations whose deliberations are closed to the public.
- The National Governor's Association receives 80% of its funds from the federal government and the remaining funds come from unaccountable private foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.⁹

⁵ See the Common Core License agreements at http://www.corestandards.org/public-license and analysis at http://blogush.edublogs.org/2012/09/11/common-core-copyright/

⁶ See the ESEA Flexibility Policy Document at http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/documents/esea-flexibility-acc.doc

⁷ In March of 2010, the Obama Administration sent Congress a Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act listing plans to tie the standards to ESEA funding. http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/publication_pg4.html#part4

⁸ Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education - A report by the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve, Inc. http://www.achieve.org/files/BenchmarkingforSuccess.pdf, p. 7

⁹ Joy Pullman – 'State-Led' Common Core Pushed by Federally Funded Nonprofit – Heartland Institute 2/24/13 http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/04/24/state-led-common-core-pushed-federally-funded-nonprofit

- NGA is a private trade organization to which not all governors belong and whose actions are not legally binding on states. School Reform News reported, quoting former Governor George Allen (R-VA), "Governors do vote during NGA's two annual meetings to express shared priorities but that 'by the time they vote on a position the [resolutions] get watered down so much any objections are already accommodated. It's unlike legislatures, with committee hearings and votes." 10
- Although teachers were allowed to submit comments as the standards were developed, there is no indication
 that these comments were actually reviewed and incorporated into the final product because only a summary
 was released to the public.¹¹
- The appointed Florida State Board of Education adopted the standards without holding any explanatory public hearings and without consulting the elected legislature or school board members.

Major proponents of the standards say that teachers and districts will be able to have flexibility and choose their own curriculum. However, because stakes are so high for test results, it is far more likely that teachers and districts will have to choose something much closer to the federal model curriculum that goes with the federally funded and supervised national tests in order to maintain funding, jobs, etc.

Despite the recently passed Florida education law requiring the Common Core test implementation schedule to be based on "funding, sufficient field and baseline data, access to assessments, instructional alignment, and school district readiness to administer the common core assessments online," there will likely be little flexibility.

In addition, recently signed legislation, HB 7009, 13 contains the following language:

Section 6.

Full implementation of online assessments for Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in English/language arts and mathematics adopted under s. 1003.41, Florida Statutes, for all kindergarten through grade 12 public school students shall occur only after the technology infrastructure, connectivity, and capacity of all public schools and school districts have been load tested and independently verified as ready for successful deployment and implementation.

Section 7.

The technology infrastructure, connectivity, and capacity of all public schools and school districts that administer statewide standardized assessments pursuant to s. 1008.22, Florida Statutes, including online assessments, shall be load tested and independently verified as appropriate, adequate, efficient, and sustainable.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Summary of Public Feedback on the Draft College- and Career- Readiness Standards for English-Language Arts and Mathematics http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CorePublicFeedback.pdf

¹² Chapter No. <u>2013–27</u>, (See enrolled version of SB 1076), lines 2057–2065 http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1076/BillText/er/HTML

 $^{^{13}}$ See engrossed version of HB 7009, lines 998–1011 at http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/7009/BillText/er/PDF

It is highly unlikely that every district in the state will have the financial and technical wherewithal to be able to begin online assessments by the spring of 2015 given the wide variation of districts throughout the state. This was confirmed by a July 17,2013 letter from House Speaker Will Weatherford and Senate President Don Gaetz to former Commissioner Bennett: 14

"Per the recent independent load testing of three Florida school districts, 50 percent of the schools were not equipped for basic testing activities. In short, neither districts nor the state can realistically achieve the minimum bandwidth and a 2:1 ratio by the anticipated 2014-2015 school year full implementation of PARCC. If some PARCC testing is to be done on computer and some by pencil, we are concerned about the prospect of further delays in getting results as well as accuracy and validity."

Charlotte County Superintendent Douglas Whitaker and Board Chairman Lee Swift both stated that, despite raising concerns about the very issues listed in these statutes, appointed former Commissioner Bennett and his appointed State Board of Education were ignoring concerns of elected school boards across the state telling them to fully implement Common Core no matter what.

Whittaker assured those in attendance that "the board is doing all it can to let the state know members are concerned about certain aspects of the standards, including their quick implementation." Behind closed doors, it's really interesting the conversations we have with politicians,' he said." ¹⁵

This is shocking. Elected school boards are being forced to implement a program about which they have received little information and inadequate time and funds to put in place. Either the legislature needs to require that the SBOE and commissioner be elected and accountable to the people or they need to admit that county school boards have absolutely no role in educational policy, dissolve them, and save the taxpayers the money spent on salaries and benefits. This, of course, would be admitting the truth - Common Core allows for no local control or input.

Finally, there are the legal and constitutional issues. As the U.S. Constitution is silent on the matter of education, under the Tenth Amendment, it is a power that is reserved to the states and the people. In addition, there are three federal laws that prohibit the federal government from being involved in standards, curriculum, and testing:

The General Education Provisions Act¹⁶ says, "No provision of any applicable program shall be construed to authorize any department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States to exercise any direction, supervision or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, or personnel of educational institution, school, or school system…"

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act says, "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the Federal Government to mandate, direct, or control a State, local educational agency, or school's curriculum,

¹⁴ p.1 http://media.parentsrock.org/FL_Legislature_Letter-to-Tony-Bennett_PARCC_2013-07-13.pdf

¹⁵ Adam Kreger, Common Core a sore subject for protesters, Charlotte Sun, 6/21/13

¹⁶20 U.S.C. § 1232a as cited by and quoted from Eitel, Robert and Talbert, Kent – The Road to a National Curriculum: The Legal Aspects of the Common Core Standards, Race to the Top, and Conditional Waivers – The Pioneer Institute, February 2012, at http://pioneerinstitute.org/education/is-the-us-department-of-education-violating-federal-law-by-directing-standards-tests-and-curricula/

program of instruction, or allocation of State and local resources, or mandate a State or any subdivision thereof to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this Act.¹⁷"

The Department of Education Organization Act¹⁸ contains similar language to the other two laws cited above. In addition, this act contains language that says:

"It is the intention of the Congress in the establishment of the Department to protect the rights of the State and local governments and public and private educational institutions in the areas of educational policies and administration of programs and to strengthen and improve control of such governments and institutions over their own educational programs and policies. The Establishment of the Department of Education shall not increase the authority of the Federal Government over education or diminish the authority for education which is reserved to the States and the local school systems and other instrumentalities of the states."

Although the federal Department of Education was at its creation, and remains, unconstitutional, the intent of Congress in the 1970s and the reality of today remain widely divergent.

Finally, the U.S. House of Representatives, on July 19, 2013 passed their bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind. That bill contained very strong language both expressing concern about the federal takeover of education via the Race to the Top grant program and the Common Core standards, as well as prohibiting the secretary of education from interfering in curriculum, standards, and test development. Here are some examples:

- An amendment expressing the Sense of Congress stated, "States and local educational agencies should maintain
 the rights and responsibilities of determining educational curriculum, programs of instruction, and assessments
 for elementary and secondary education."
- Florida Congressman Trey Radel (R, FL-19) said on the House floor, "The Department of Education heavily
 incentivized and pressured states into adopting the Common Core State Standards Initiatives. These national
 standards and assessments ultimately determine the curriculum and teaching materials used in classrooms across
 the nation."

¹⁷ 20 U.S.C. § 7907(a), Id.

¹⁸ 20 U.S.C. § 3403(b), Ibid.

¹⁹ H.AMDT.321 Amendment (A004) offered by Mr. Luetkemeyer. (consideration: CR H4694-4696, H4713-4714; text: CR H4694) An amendment numbered 4 printed in House Report 113-158 to express the sense of the Congress that States and local education agencies should maintain the rights and responsibilities of determining curriculum and assessments for elementary and secondary education.

²⁰ Rep. Trey Radel – Congressional Record – 7/18/13 http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/citation.result.CREC.action?

There was also language limiting the federal Department of Education from "either directly or indirectly, attempt to influence, incentivize, or coerce State adoption of the Common Core State Standards...or any other standards...or assessments tied to such standards."21 It is highly unlikely that these efforts would have been made and supported by such a large majority of the Republican delegation if there were not major concerns about federal interference in education.

²¹HR 5, The Student Success Act – Reported version, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr5rh/pdf/BILLS-113hr5rh.pdf, p. 49, lines 18–25

CHAPTER 2

Psychological Manipulation and Data Mining

Proponents of the Common Core system of standards, tests and data collection imposed by the Race to the Top competition, No Child Left Behind waivers, and other federal programs continually try to assure the public that the standards are all about teaching rigorous academics in math and English. Here is a typical statement from the Foundation for Excellence in Education:

"Common Core State Standards define what students need to know at each grade level. They are simple, clear and rigorous academic expectations." ²²

They never mention the teaching of non-academic, psychosocial attitudes, values, and beliefs. They try to explain away this appalling psychosocial indoctrination and the accompanying monitoring and data collection resulting from the adoption of these standards and tests. Here is a typical statement from a brochure distributed by the House Majority Leader's office:

"Common Core State Standards will not erode students' privacy rights or allow the federal government to inappropriately 'track' students, as some pundits have declared." 23

Even a cursory examination of federal documents, news articles, curriculum, and proposed Florida legislation shows both of these statements to be false. Here are some examples:

According to the Data Quality Campaign (another quasi-governmental group funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,²⁴ as well as other corporations and foundations, and often referenced by Common Core proponents), the government having and using the data is of a higher priority than student privacy:

"While state policymakers bear the responsibility for protecting student privacy, they need not do so at the sake of restricting the use of quality, longitudinal education data in support of their ultimate goal: improving student achievement."²⁵

²² Foundation for Excellence in Education -Common Core Myths vs. Facts, 5.31.13 http://excelined.org/2013/05/myth-v-fact-taking-on-the-tallest-tales-about-common-core-state-standards/

²³ Majority Leader Steve Precourt - Common Core Education Standards - House Majority Office, April 20, 2013

²⁴ National Data Quality Campaign Funders - http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/who-we-are/funders/

²⁵ Complying with FERPA and Other Federal Privacy and Security Laws and Maximizing Appropriate Data Use – Data Quality Campaign 3/1/13 http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/find-resources/complying-with-ferpa-and-other-federal-privacy-and-security-laws-and-maximizing-appropriate-data-use/

Common Core is not just about teaching academics but about instilling psychological attitudes, as revealed in the following quotation:

"Researchers should work closely with technology developers to continue to explore how to integrate best
practices into new and emerging digital learning environments that are well positioned to promote grit,
tenacity, and perseverance, and key psychological resources (mindsets, learning strategies, and
effortful control) for a range of purposes."²⁶ (Emphasis added)

Curriculum has already been developed to teach psychological attitudes and beliefs. Here is an example of such curriculum for first grade English Language Arts, entitled *Voices*, approved for use to teach the Common Core standards in Utah:

- "In the *Voices* Democracy theme, **students use their voices to advocate solutions to social problems that they care deeply about**. They are involved in learning the following theme related social knowledge and skills: **social role models, social advocacy, and respect for each other**."²⁷ (Emphasis added.)
- "Tell students when they write a call to action, **they should include emotional words** to get readers to feel so strongly about a problem that they want to do what is being asked of them." ²⁸(Emphasis added.)

The federal Department of Education admits that there are plans to monitor and record psychological and affective data on children as part of the Common Core aligned assessments:

- "[A]s new assessment systems are developed to reflect the new standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science, significant attention will need to be given to the design of tasks and situations that call on students to apply a range of 21st century competencies that are relevant to each discipline. A sustained program of research and development will be required to create assessments that are capable of measuring cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills." (Emphasis added).
- There are important opportunities to leverage new and emerging advances in technology (e.g., educational data mining, affective computing, online resources, tools for teachers) to develop unprecedented approaches for a wide range of students."³⁰ (Emphasis added.)

²⁶ U.S. Department of Education Office of Technology - Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century - February 2013 http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/files/2013/02/OET-Draft-Grit-Report-2-17-13.pdf, p. 17

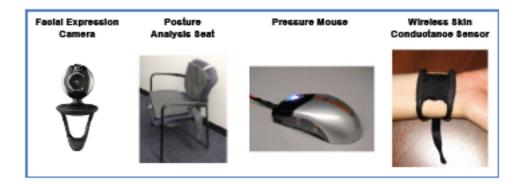
²⁷ Voices ELA Curriculum as quoted and filmed in You Tube video "Indoctrination in Common Core ELA Texts:" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGph7QHzmo8&feature=youtu.be

²⁸Ibid

²⁹National Research Council 2012 Report on 21st Century Knowledge and Skills (NRC, 2012) as quoted in Nicole Shechtman – Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century – U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Draft, February 2013, http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/files/2013/02/OET-Draft-Grit-Report-2-17-13.pdf, p. 49 of pdf

³⁰ USED, OET, op cit., p. 17

• The "affective computing" mentioned above, according to the same federal report, is accomplished using the devices in this picture:³¹



Psychological assessment and monitoring is also accomplished directly via Common Core aligned curriculum, such as in the *Voices c*urriculum quoted above, but in this instance for third grade:³²

- "The Student Observation Form on Assessment Handbook page 11 is an informal assessment tool that notes growth and change in individual students' behaviors and attitudes." (Emphasis added.)
- Under that rubric,³³ students are graded at various levels on whether they "Use first person plural voice (our) to advocate ways to solve the problem." (Emphasis added.)

Instead of knowledge-based academic and cognitive concepts, our children will be taught and assessed on controversial psychosocial attitudes and beliefs and have that data become part of their records – all without parental knowledge or consent. This data can and will likely be used to psychologically profile children for everything from "kindergarten readiness;" to the type of job for which government or corporate authorities determine they are most suited; to whether they are "at risk" for some type of psychiatric diagnosis, even though mental screening of children is notoriously inaccurate and treatments are dangerous and ineffective; to whether they have adequately internalized some government desired concept. Here are some examples in the early childhood realm based on a summary³⁴ of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge from applicant states and a discussion by Education Liberty Watch:³⁵

³¹ Ibid

³² Indoctrination in Common Core ELA Test, op cit. Third grade

³³ Ibid

³⁴Stepping Up to the Challenge Profiles of the 2011 Early Learning Challenge Grant Applications http://bit.ly/yDjUau

³⁵ Government Preschool Tyranny – "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet!" Education Liberty Watch 2/24/12 http://edlibertywatch.org/2012/02/government-preschool-tyranny-you-aint-seen-nothing-yet/

"'Rhode Island's proposed early learning data system will be linked to both the state's K-12 data system and to the state's universal newborn screening and health data system, helping to identify children with high needs, track participation in programs, and track children's development and learning.' This is a classic example of the rapidly expanding philosophy that the government owns every single bit of medical and education data about you and every family member from conception until after death. We are seeing this played out in the realm of DNA medical data and now private mental health data through these subjective and worthless assessments. These assessments will then be added and linked to health data so that government bureaucrats will be able to label the young children they consider to be mentally ill or flag them for future evaluations."

"Preschool Standards Aligned with Common Core Standards and or K-3 Standards – Rhode Island explicitly admits plans to align their preschool standards with the Common Core standards for K-3. California, Massachusetts, Maryland, North Carolina, and Washington also plan to do this."

"Minnesota now plans to impose "non-academic developmental domains for children age five to 12." This means that the state government plans to decide what will be normal for ALL children ages birth to twelve in the state of Minnesota to think, believe, and behave. Increased developmental screening in California, North Carolina, and Maryland, is likely to be based on either more socioemotional standards or an expanded emphasis on them."

That assessment data will be put into our children's "cradle to career" dossier as required for the State Longitudinal Data System that is required under Race to the Top, other stimulus grants, and the No Child Left Behind waivers program. In fact, here is language from the data warehouse bill authored in Florida and promoted by the Foundation for Florida's Future, founded by former governor Jeb Bush:

"To promote adoption of a common set of data elements identified by the National Center for Education Statistics to support the effective exchange of data within and across states." ³⁶

This data will be in a child's permanent record that will be linked to the nearly four hundred data points³⁷ monitored by the National Center for Education Statistics. Many of those data points are non-academic and include:

Religious Affiliation

Bus Route, Bus Stop, and Arrival Time

At Risk Status

Disease, Illness, or Health Condition

Political Affiliation

Voting Status

 $^{^{36}}$ See lines 114-116 of SB 878 found at $\frac{http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0878/BillText/e2/HTML}$. Identical language is found in HB 7027.

³⁷ See both the National Center for Education Statistics Student Data Handbook at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/handbook/toc.asp and the National Education Data Model that was removed from the NCES website, a screenshot of which was saved and reproduced at http://www.flstopcccoalition.org/national-education-data-model/

Not specifically mentioned in the lists of data elements but discussed in National Center for Education Statistics technical reports on how to handle student data in the State Longitudinal Data System is information about "fingerprints and other biometric data." ³⁸

According to the regulations for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), biometric data includes:

"Biometric record," as used in the definition of "personally identifiable information," means a record of one or more measurable biological or behavioral characteristics that can be used for automated recognition of an individual. Examples include fingerprints; **retina and iris patterns**; voiceprints; **DNA sequence**; facial characteristics; and handwriting." ³⁹ (Emphasis added)

This is particularly troubling given the incident in which children in Polk County underwent iris scanning without parental knowledge or consent and parents cannot be assured that the data has been destroyed.⁴⁰

In addition to the types of data described above, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights is proposing changes to federal rules to be able to collect information about bullying and harassment incidents that will now include the very controversial categories of religion and sexual orientation, as well as "perceived religion" and "perceived sexual orientation" described as follows in materials submitted for the rules process:

Harassment and Bullying

Attachment A3

CRDC Data Set for School Years 2013-14 and 2015-16

Page A3-10

New!

Category Name: Civil Rights Category (Allegations)

Definition Category of discrimination on a particular basis (including sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, and religion).

Comments...

Harassment or bullying on the basis of sexual orientation – Sexual orientation harassment or bullying is intimidation or abusive behavior toward a **student based on actual or perceived sexual orientation**. Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful or humiliating. The conduct can be carried out by school employees, other students, and non-employee third parties.

Harassment or bullying on the basis of religion – Religious harassment or bullying is intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student **based on actual or perceived religion.** Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and

³⁸ Data Stewardship: Managing Personally Identifiable Information in Electronic Student Records - SLDS Technical Brief November, 2010 http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011602.pdf

³⁹ Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 99.3 http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?
c=ecfr&sid=11975031b82001bed902b3e73f33e604&rgn=div5&view=text&node=34:1.1.1.33&idno=34#34
:1.1.1.33.4.132.1

⁴⁰ FL Students Get Creepy 'Iris Scans' ... Without Permission! – http://foxnewsinsider.com/2013/05/30/florida-students-get-iris-scans-polk-county-without-parental-permission#ixzz2YEFzlgxe

written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful or humiliating. The conduct can be carried out by school employees, other students, and non-employee third parties.⁴¹ (Emphasis added.)

This is all problematic because every state, as a result of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA "Stimulus") and the Race to the Top Grant Program, which was also part of ARRA, are required to have full state longitudinal data systems that share this kind of very sensitive data with other states, the federal government, and outside researchers and corporations:

Race to the Top Regulations – Priority 4: Invitational Priority–Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems.

"The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to expand **statewide longitudinal data systems to include or integrate data** from special education programs, English language learner programs, \1\ early childhood programs, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, and school climate and culture programs, as well as information on student mobility, human resources (i.e., information on teachers, principals, and other staff), school finance, **student health**, postsecondary education, and other relevant areas, with the purpose of connecting and coordinating all parts of the system to allow important questions related to policy, practice, or overall effectiveness to be asked, answered, and incorporated into effective continuous improvement practices." (Emphasis added.)

The advocates of this kind of invasive data collection on our children and their families constantly say that student privacy is protected by FERPA and that parents should not be concerned; yet the regulations for FERPA⁴³ contain a long list of those entities that may be given individual student data without consent:

- § 99.31 Under what conditions is prior consent not required to disclose information?
- (a) An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record of a student without the consent required by § 99.30 if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions:
- (1)(i)(A) The disclosure is to other school officials, including teachers, within the agency or institution whom the agency or institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests.

⁴¹ Attachment A-3 Data Categories for Civil Rights Data Collection for School Years 2013-14 and 2015-16 http://www.regulations.gov/contentStreamer?
objectId=0900006481337397&disposition=attachment&contentType=pdf

⁴² Race to the Top Announcement – Federal Register FR Doc E9–27427[Federal Register: November 18, 2009 (Volume 74, Number 221)] http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/ 2009–4/111809c.html

 $^{^{43}}$ Title 34: Education PART 99—FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY – § 99.30 Under what conditions is prior consent required to disclose information? $\frac{\text{http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?}}{\text{c=ecfr&sid=}11975031b82001bed902b3e73f33e604\&rgn=div5\&view=text&node=}34:1.1.1.33\&idno=}34\#34:1.1.1.33.4.132.1$

(B) A contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a school official under this paragraph provided that the outside party... (Emphasis added)

Proponents also claim that any data sent to the federal government is only in aggregate, not individual form, giving the impression that student privacy is not compromised. That claim is contradicted by the cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Education and the PARCC testing consortium requiring individual data from the assessments to be given to the federal government:

"Comply with and where applicable coordinate with the ED staff to fulfill the program requirements established in the RTTA Notice Inviting Applications and the conditions on the grant award, as well as to this agreement, including, but not limited to working with the Department to develop a strategy to **make student - level data** that results from the assessment system available on an ongoing basis for research, including for prospective linking, validity, and program improvement studies; subject to applicable privacy laws." (Emphasis added)

This is highly significant because it shows that one of the main goals for uniform national assessments like PARCC is for the federal government to have access to highly personal **individual** student data. This information combined with the federal plans discussed above to make sure that these federally funded and supervised assessments measure psychological attributes⁴⁵ which will then be kept in a child's lifelong data dossier is in this author's opinion as a pediatrician and a parent, the worst, most freedom endangering aspect of the entire Common Core system.

Because of the significant weakening of FERPA regulations that occurred in 2011, there are many people who have access to students' and their families' sensitive individually identifiable information described above. Here is the definition of authorized representative in the federal regulations:⁴⁶

"Authorized representative means any entity or individual designated by a State or local educational authority or an agency headed by an official listed in § 99.31(a)(3) to conduct—with respect to Federal- or State-supported education programs—any audit or evaluation, or any compliance or enforcement activity in connection with Federal legal requirements that relate to these programs."

This expansion of who has access to personally identifiable information occurred as a direct result of a regulatory weakening of FERPA by the Obama Administration. In fact, The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) is suing the U.S. Department of Education in federal court over this very matter.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT Between the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION and the PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS OF COLLEGE AND CAREERS 1/7/11 PR/Award #: \$395B10001 and \$395B10001A http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/parcc-cooperative-agreement.pdf as cited by Jane Robbins - Countering Florida GOP Leaders Defense of the Common Core - American Principles Project via Truth in American Education 7/25/13 http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-state-standards/our-response-to-florida-republican-leaders-defense-of-common-core/

⁴⁵ Please see footnotes 29-31 and associated text.

⁴⁶ See FERPA regulations, op cit.

⁴⁷In Federal Court EPIC Defends Student Privacy - http://epic.org/2013/01/in-federal-court-epic-defends.html

Besides the federal government, affective computing and extensive non-academic data collection is being promoted by private foundations and corporations:

- The Washington Post reported that studies involving the wireless skin conductance bracelets pictured above were funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.⁴⁸
- The Gates Foundation is also funding efforts to eventually have a camera in every classroom to monitor how teachers are teaching their students.⁴⁹

The inBloom database is a joint effort of Microsoft, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Carnegie Foundation, and Amplify Education (a division of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation). A story published by Reuters reveals:

"In operation just three months, the database already holds files on millions of children identified by name, address and sometimes social security number. Learning disabilities are documented, test scores recorded, attendance noted. In some cases, the database tracks student hobbies, career goals, attitudes toward school-even homework completion." ⁵⁰

This kind of psychological manipulation, monitoring, and data collection on innocent children and their families is absolutely unacceptable in a free nation. Outrage has ensued as more and more parents in Florida and across the nation learn about these invasive practices. The Massachusetts and New York chapters of both the PTA and the ACLU wrote strong letters and threatened lawsuits to their respective departments of education.⁵¹ Parent protests resulted in the Louisiana Superintendent of Education stopping the entry of that state's student data into the inBloom database and other states are no longer willing to claim to be partners.⁵²

Here in Florida, strong parental opposition and lobbying by citizen groups such as Florida Eagle Forum and what is now the Florida Stop Common Core Coalition, was able to stop SB878/HB7027, despite the fact that it had passed both chambers unanimously with only the difference of a small amendment. ⁵³ Efforts to resurrect this bill in the 2014 session will be met with similar outrage and resistance, and will be accompanied by loss of support for politicians (of whichever party) who continue to push this kind of tyranny.

⁴⁸http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/11-million-plus-gates-grants-galvanic-bracelets-that-measure-student-engagement/2012/06/10/gJQAgAUbTV_blog.html and http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/gates-changes-galvanic-bracelet-grant-description/2012/06/12/gJQAPkEAYV_blog.html

⁴⁹ Bill Gates Wants America to Spend \$5B for Video Cameras in Every Classroom - The College Fix 4/24/13 http://www.thecollegefix.com/post/13289/

⁵⁰ Stephanie Simon – K–12 student database jazzes tech startups, spooks parents – Reuters 3/3/13 http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/03/us-education-database-idUSBRE92204W20130303

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Valerie Strauss – Privacy concerns grow over Gates-funded student database – Washington Post 6/9/13 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/06/09/privacy-concerns-grow-over-gates-funded-student-database/

⁵³ Activists & Education Liberty Watch Combine to Stop Florida Data Mining Bill - Education Liberty Watch 5/11/13 http://edlibertywatch.org/2013/05/activists-education-liberty-watch-combine-to-stop-florida-data-mining-bill/

Legislators will find much greater support if they work to:

- Enact bills that strengthen FERPA
- Enact a state level Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment
- Refuse the strings such as, unfunded mandates, regulations, and expense of the entire Common Core system of standard and aligned tests including psychological ones
- Extricate Florida from the state longitudinal data systems

CHAPTER 3

Academic Quality/Rigor/International Benchmarking

Proponents contend that the Common Core standards are rigorous and benchmarked to those of the United States' high performing international competitors. The public is therefore supposed to believe that using these standards will produce graduates and workers that will not need remediation in college and that will be qualified for high paying jobs in the competitive global economic marketplace. Senator John Legg, typical of these proponents, said in his June 14, 2013 Tampa Tribune column:⁵⁴

"The Common Core State Standards are built upon strengths of current state standards but are internationally benchmarked, preparing all students to succeed in our global economy and society."

These contentions are incorrect. Let us deal first with the issue of international benchmarking. The Common Core standards website itself no longer uses the phrase "internationally benchmarked" but instead says that they "are informed by other top performing countries." Repeated requests by members of the standards validation committees for data about this benchmarking were ignored. This resulted in five highly respected academicians, including Dr. Sandra Stotsky and Dr. James Milgram, on those committees to refuse to sign off on the final version of the standards. Dr. Milgram, professor emeritus at Stanford, and one of the few, if not the only academic mathematician on the math validation committee, said the following as the standards process unfolded:

"The standards' leisurely development of basic arithmetic skills and failure to prepare students for an authentic Algebra 1 course in grade 8 mean that Common Core's mathematics standards are at a significantly lower level than those in California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Indiana and in the highest-achieving countries... Our basic concern is whether final decisions not to align with the most demanding mathematics standards in this country and elsewhere have already been made." ⁵⁷

Dr. Milgram has gone on to say that the Common Core math standards will put US students two years behind their international peers by the end of eighth grade and farther behind at the end of high school.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Legg, op cit.

⁵⁵ About the Standards - Common Core State Standards Initiative Last accessed 8/9/13 http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards

⁵⁶Sandra Stotsky - Invited Testimony on the Low Quailty of the Common Core Standards. Testimony Submitted to Colorado's State Board of Education, 12/6/12 http://www.uaedreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2000/01/Stotsky_Testimony_for_Colorado.pdf

⁵⁷ Sandra Stotsky and James Milgram – Fair to Middling: High-Standards States Far Exceed National Standards – Pioneer Institute, March 2010 http://pioneerinstitute.org/education/fair-to-middling-high-standards-standards/ See page 10 of the downloadable document at this link.

⁵⁸James Milgram - Testimony to the Indiana Senate Education Committee - 1/23/12 http://bnosiersagainstcommoncore.com/james-milgram-testimony-to-the-indiana-senate-committee/

Even if the contention of international benchmarking was true, the larger question is, what do national standards and international comparisons have to do with actual student achievement and economic competitiveness? Neil McCluskey of the Cato Institute rightly reminds us:

It is true that most nations that have outperformed the United States on such tests as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Program for International Student Assessment have national standards, but so do most nations that have done worse. To illustrate, on the 2007 eighth-grade TIMSS mathematics assessment, the eight countries that outperformed the United States had national standards. But, then, so did 33 of the 39 nations that scored lower. Moreover, 11 of the 12 lowest performers had national standards. When looking only at countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development—generally, economically advanced nations—the same non-correlation holds: four OECD members outperformed the United States, six did worse, and all but the United States and Australia had national standards.

All of this holds true for the 2007 TIMSS eighth-grade science assessment, on which all 10 nations that outperformed the United States had national curricula—but so did 33 of the 37 lesser performers and the 9 lowest performers. Among OECD members, five posted better scores than the United States, five did worse, and only the United States and Australia did not have national standards. ⁵⁹

Dr. Christopher Tienken of Seton Hall University who has studied and written on education reform efforts for many years correctly discusses the fact that the Common Core Standards and assessment scheme is predicated on an intellectually baseless argument – not on empirical evidence:

Unfortunately for proponents of this empirically vapid argument it is well established that a rank on an international test of academic skills and knowledge does not have the power to predict future economic competitiveness and is otherwise meaningless for a host of reasons (Baker, 2007; Bracey, 2009; Tienken, 2008).

However, fortunately for proponents it seems as if some policy makers, education leaders and those who prepare them, and the major education associations and organizations that penned their support for the CCSS did not read the evidence refuting the argument or they did not understand it. The contention that a test result can influence the future economic prowess of a country like the United States (U.S.) or any of the G20 nations represents an unbelievable suspension of logic and evidence.

The fact is China and its continued manipulation of its currency, the Yuan, and iron-fisted control of its labor pool, has a greater effect on our economic strength than if every American child scored at the top of every international test, the SAT, the ACT, the GRE, or the MAT.

⁵⁹ Neal McCluskey - Behind the Curtain: Assessing the Case for National Curriculum Standards - Policy Analysis 661, Cato Institute, 2/17/10, p. 8 http://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa661.pdf

According to Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman, China's undervaluation of its currency cost the U.S. almost 1 million jobs and over 200 billion dollars in lost economic growth and 1.5% of its gross domestic product last year (The Washington Times, 2010). Economic strength of the G20 countries relies more on policy, than education achievement. Tax, trade, health, labor, finance, monetary, housing, and natural resource policies, to name a few, drive our economy, not how students rank on the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) or the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). ⁶⁰

Another major argument by proponents is that the Common Core Standards are more rigorous than those of most states based on evaluations by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. This contention, however, must be viewed suspiciously for two reasons.

The first issue is conflict of interest. Fordham has received contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation of \$5,211,462⁶¹. The Fordham Institute also lists General Electric (GE) as a major donor. ⁶² Both Microsoft and GE stand to make billions on everything from educational software to affective computing equipment.

The second reason to question the Fordham Institute's views about Common Core is research from the Brookings Institution showing there is no correlation between Fordham's ratings and actual academic achievement in a given state that they have rated. 63

However, even those that hold the Fordham view concede that Florida's standards are already near or above the same level of rigor as the Common Core⁶⁴ as illustrated by this chart. This begs the question as to why the State of Florida must put its education system through such wrenching changes to obtain essentially the same level of rigor, especially when the current standards are not preventing more than seventy percent of Florida high school graduates from needing remediation in college:

Subject	Common Core Grade	Florida Grade
Mathematics	Α-	Α
English Language Arts	B+	В

There are many other concerning facts about the academic rigor – or lack thereof – of the Common Core standards. These include:

⁶⁰ Christopher Tienken, Editor of the American Association of School Administrators Journal of Scholarship and Practice – Common Core State Standards: An Example of Data-less Decision Making – Winter 2011, Volume 7, No. 4, pp. 3-18 at http://mathforum.org/kb/servlet/JiveServlet/JiveServlet/download/323-2289422-7524512-690019/att1.html

⁶¹ These totals were calculated by adding the amounts of the grants listed after entering the names of both FEE and the Fordham Institute in the search engine at the Gates Foundation website: http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database#

⁶² Funding and Financials - http://www.edexcellence.net/about-us/funding-and-finances.html

⁶³Thomas Loveless - How Well Are American Students Learning? - 2012 Brown Center Report, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2012/2/brown%20center/0216_brown_education_loveless.pdf, p. 6

⁶⁴ See Sheila Carmichael, et al – The State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010 – Thomas B. Fordham Institute 7/21/10 Florida page http://edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2010/201007_state_education_standards_common_standards/Florida.pdf

College Readiness

The standards define college readiness as being the same for 4-year, 2-year, and vocational colleges⁶⁵ and one of the math standards writers admitted at a 2010 public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that "the concept of college readiness is minimal and focuses on non-selective colleges."⁶⁶

English

- High school level standards that are supposed to be "college ready" standards are actually at a "6th to 8th grade level."⁶⁷ (Emphasis added.)
- Chief architects, David Coleman (now head of the College Board) and Susan Pimentel, have had no experience teaching English or reading at any grade level from K-12.⁶⁸
- According to experts the standards are described as empty skill sets; there is significant reduction in literary study leading "to fewer opportunities for students to acquire the general academic vocabulary needed for college work;" and the division of reading standards will lead to a completely incoherent literature curriculum in grades 6-12.⁶⁹
- Texts are being taught without historical context e.g. Animal Farm⁷⁰ and the Gettysburg Address, the latter of which was to be done so as to "level the playing field."⁷¹ In other words, one of America's great documents is being used to implement a politically correct view of social justice.

Mathematics

 Chief architects, Professors William McCallum and Jason Zimba, have never taught mathematics at any grade level from K-12.⁷²

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/teacher-one-maddening-day-working-with-the-common-core/2012/03/15/gIQA8J4WUS_blog.html

⁶⁵ Dr. Michael Kirst of Stanford University, President of California State School Board admits that PARCC sees college and career readiness as equivalent in a presentation to the California Senate Education Committee 3/13/13 http://collegepuzzle.stanford.edu/?p=2938 at 10:40

⁶⁶ Sandra Stotsky – How Long Before Duncan and the Media Speak Out Honestly? 7/10/13 http://pioneerinstitute.org/featured/how-long-before-duncan-and-the-media-speak-out-honestly-by-sandra-stotsky

⁶⁷ Sandra Stotsky – Exiting the National Standards Bandwagon – Heritage Foundation 4/17/12 http://www.heritage.org/events/2012/04/national-standards at 32:00

⁶⁸ Stotsky, Colorado testimony, op cit.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Mary Grabar - Common Core: Orwellian Lessons in Florida - 1/19/13 http://townhall.com/columnists/marygrabar/2013/01/19/common-core-orwellian-lessons-in-florida-n1490561/page/full/

⁷¹Jeremiah Chaffee (guest columnist) – Teacher: One (maddening) day working with the Common Core – The Answer Sheet, Washington Post 3/23/12

⁷² Stotsky, Colorado testimony, op cit.

- According to experts, Common Core removes the mathematical concepts that are critical for four year
 college readiness, STEM careers, international competitiveness, and are major delays and steps backwards
 from the most highly rated state standards and those of other countries.⁷³
- Geometry is taught by an experimental method that has never worked and prevents the teaching of proofs and deductive reasoning as in traditional Euclidian geometry.⁷⁴
- Florida math tutor and author for Independent Voices for Better Education, Katherine Livermore, writes the following about one of many problems with the Common Core math standards:

The actual wording: "Fluently add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm," is not seen until Grade 4. Multiplication using the Standard is delayed until 5^{th} Grade, division until 6^{th} Grade. All four basic operations using decimals wait for the Standard Algorithm until 6^{th} Grade. The grade level sections on fractions – and all the "conceptualizing" that goes with them – I found very confusing as I searched in vain for any mention of the use of the Standard Algorithm. Far from being balanced in juxtaposing procedure and concept, as claimed by the authors multiple times, the Core tilts so far toward "concept" for so many years that procedure is in grave danger of ever being achieved. 75

Common Core proponents frequently contradict themselves about the academic quality of the standards. One example is in Senator Legg's column quoted at the beginning of this section. First the senator says the standards "are internationally benchmarked, preparing all students to succeed in our global economy," indicating that they are of high quality and rigor. Later in his column he says, "Florida…has adopted its own rigorous standards beyond the minimum Common Core State Standards…" Which is it? The standards cannot be both rigorous and minimum at the same time.

Another major issue with academic quality is the radical nature of some of the curriculum that is used for teaching the Common Core standards, and even worse, some of the text examples that are listed in one of the official appendices of the English standards. In an example of radical curriculum from Rochester, New York, students were required to convince the teacher that they are "loyal to the Nazis by writing an essay convincing [the teacher] that Jews are evil and the source of [Germany's] problems." At the end of the assignment students are told, "Please remember, your life [here in Nazi Germany in the 30's] may depend on it."

When confronted by parental outrage and inquiries from the press, the superintendent, "Vanden Wyngaard said the exercise reflects the **type of writing expected of students under the new Common Core curriculum**, the tough new academic standards that require more sophisticated writing." (Emphasis added.)

⁷³Christel Swasey -Weber County Republican Women's Meeting Speech on Common Core - 1/7/13 http://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com/tag/education-without-representation/ and James Milgram on the Common Core math standards http://parentsacrossamerica.org/james-milgram-on-the-new-core-curriculum-standards-in-math/

⁷⁴ Parents Across America, op. cit.

⁷⁵ Katherine Livermore – Common Core Elementary Math Standards – writing on the Independent Voices for Better Education website 3/7/13 http://parentsoped.blogspot.com/2013/03/common-core-elementary-math-standards.html

⁷⁶ Tiffany Gabbay – Students Asked to 'Argue That Jews Are Evil' and Prove Nazi Loyalty in Assignment Linked to Common Core – 4/12/13 www.TheBlaze.com

An example contained in the official list of Common Core English text exemplars is the controversial novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez.⁷⁷ According to the authors of the standards, this novel is meant to be taught to ninth and tenth grade students, even though some college professors are embarrassed to teach it due to its sexually explicit nature. In addition, the novel glorifies leftist tyrant Fidel Castro and his brothers, and promotes the concepts of radical feminism, portraying men as weak drunkards.⁷⁸

Besides the teacher text exemplar's direction to not teach the Gettysburg Address in historical context so as to level the playing field mentioned above, there is another example of bias against America's founding and freedom principles. Although the U.S. Constitution is mentioned in the Common Core English standards Appendix B, only the Bill of Rights and the Preamble are listed.⁷⁹ Students are not encouraged to read the entire document that contains the bedrock principles of our government, but they are encouraged to read slanted analysis of it focusing on exclusion of women, slaves, Native Americans, etc. as part of "We the People," as well as significant parts of the regulatory manual from the EPA entitled *Recommended Levels of Insulation*.⁸¹

While Common Core proponents may dismiss these concerns as isolated examples of bad curriculum, these concerns cannot be so easily overlooked – especially in the case of the Alvarez novel and the exemplars related to the Constitution – because they are on the official list of text exemplars put out by the Core Standards organization. In both cases, it is highly unlikely that these would have been used in any classroom unless school or district personnel thought that using them would result in better student performance on the all-consuming, all-important standardized tests – upon which every school, teacher, administrator, and student depends before they can advance, graduate, be paid, receive tenure, or district funding.

In addition to all of the other academic quality issues listed here, the standards have not been field tested anywhere. They are already being taught in the elementary grades in Florida with plans for teaching them in all grades and assessing them in Florida with high-stakes tests in 2015. Testing time is expected to double⁸² and there will be serious problems with test security due to lack of access to computers.⁸³ It therefore appears that these standards and their accompanying high-stakes tests, if fully implemented, will be administered contrary to the newly signed state law which says:

⁷⁷ The Common Core Standards, Appendix B, p. 108 of the PDF http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

⁷⁸ Mary Grabar - Common Core 'Exemplars': Graphic Sex and Praising Castro - Front Page Mag 5/7/13 http://frontpagemag.com/2013/mary-grabar/common-core-exemplars-graphic-sex-and-praising-castro/?
http://frontpagemag.com/2013/mary-grabar/common-core-exemplars-graphic-sex-and-praising-castro/?
https://www.dastro.com/and-castro.com/2013/mary-grabar/common-core-exemplars-graphic-sex-and-praising-castro/?
<a href="https://www.dastro.com/and-castro.com/an

⁷⁹ Appendix B, op cit., pages 93 and 166 of PDF

⁸⁰Linda Monk - Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution - as quoted in Common Core Standards, Appendix B, op cit., p. 95 of PDF

⁸¹ Ibid., page 138-9 of PDF

⁸² Kreger, op cit.

⁸³ South Carolina Senator Mike Fair – BIG PROBLEMS WITH COMMON CORE STUDENT TESTING SCHEME – Education Week 9/29/12 http://educationviews.org/big-problems-with-common-core-student-testing-scheme/

"The State Board of Education shall adopt rules establishing an implementation schedule to transition from FCAT Reading, FCAT Writing, FCAT Mathematics, and Algebra I and Geometry EOC assessments to common core assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics. The schedule must take into consideration funding, sufficient field and baseline data, access to assessments instructional alignment, and school district readiness to administer the common core assessments online." (Emphasis added.)

How can the State Board of Education (SBOE) follow this law if there is no field and baseline data obtained for the testing? This does not even begin to include the many other factors listed in this statute that are not being addressed by the appointed SBOE and now former Commissioner Bennett who, according to reports, have been mercilessly ignoring the statutes and forcing implementation of the standards and tests on elected school boards.⁸⁵

Finally, in addition to the concerns of biased curriculum and testing being developed based on these academically inferior standards, there is also the major issue of the enormous impact that test results have on the lives of students, teachers and districts. There have already been major cheating scandals related to test "accountability" in Atlanta⁸⁶ and Washington DC⁸⁷ with teachers and district officials changing test scores in order to maintain funding, salaries and tenure. Now we learn that state officials also have changed school grades based on these test scores for political reasons.

Florida's vaunted A-F school grading system established by former Governor Jeb Bush had already lost significant credibility. The SBOE, including under the leadership of Tony Bennett, had made it so complicated and arbitrary that parents, teachers, districts and the public were already questioning its validity. Bennett recommended continuing the manipulative practice of preventing school grades from dropping more than one letter grade for a second year in a row. This was in part to cushion the blow from the disastrous implementation of Common Core in the early elementary grades and prevent the department from looking worse than it already did. The board complied after a contentious 4–3 vote on July 16, 2013 where board member Sally Bradshaw rightly decried that it had "...become acceptable to manipulate the truth just because the truth has become uncomfortable."

⁸⁴ Chapter No. <u>2013-27</u>, op cit.

⁸⁵ Kreger, op cit.

⁸⁶ Larry Copeland – School cheating scandal shakes up Atlanta – USA Today 4/14/13 http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/04/13/atlanta-school-cheatring-race/2079327/

⁸⁷Jack Gillum and Marisol Bello – When standardized test scores soared in D.C., were the gains real? – USA Today 3/20/11http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/2011-03-28-1Aschooltesting28_CV_N.htm

 $^{^{88}}$ Anastasia Dawson –Board of Education approves "safety net" for Florida school grades – Tampa Bay Times 7/16/13

http://tbo.com/pinellas-county/board-of-education-approves-safety-net-for-florida-school-grades-20130716/

Then on July 30, 2013, an AP article reveled evidence that Bennett had already manipulated school grade data in Indiana, in this case to help a political donor. ⁸⁹ This evidence and these allegations ultimately resulted in his resignation. If Tony Bennett, as a member of the highly touted Chiefs for Change and one of the greatest Common Core experts and proponents in the entire nation cannot even begin to implement that system without doctoring test and school data in two different states, how can Common Core remain a credible and viable alternative for Florida or any other state?

⁸⁹ Associated Press – AP Exclusive: GOP Donor's School Grade Changed – New York Times, 7/30/13 http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2013/07/29/us/ap-us-indiana-school-grades.html?_r=2&

CHAPTER 4

The Effect on Parental Rights and Autonomy

Throughout the history of the United States, parents have been seen and treated as being in charge of the upbringing and education of their children. This has been affirmed in numerous U.S. Supreme Court decisions such as the 1925 decision Pierce vs. Society of Sisters, which says, "The child is not the mere creature of the state: those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

The Common Core system of standards, tests, and data collection turns that concept on its head in the following ways:

- Parents who tried to protest the Common Core system in Indian River County were threatened with arrest if they did not stop handing out anti-Common Core material.⁹⁰
- There is no way for parents to change anything about the standards or accompanying tests with their child's teacher, principal, superintendent, school board, state legislator, or even member of Congress. The standards were determined by unaccountable private groups whose deliberations are not open to the public The National Governor's Association, The Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve. Parents in many states have been told that there is no opt-out option.
- As previously discussed, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations allow access to
 individually identifiable student data without parental consent for anyone deemed to have an "educational
 interest," including corporations and volunteers.⁹¹
- As also previously discussed, the new Common Core aligned textbooks and assessments are working to teach, measure, and record psychological parameters in children starting even in preschool all without parental consent.
- Children in Polk County underwent iris scanning without parental consent. Those children's data have the distinct possibility of being included in the statewide longitudinal database that Florida was required to expand in order to comply with its Race to the Top application. This database also includes the assessment data measuring the knowledge and understanding of the Common Core standards and the development of "21st century skills" that include psychological parameters. 92

⁹⁰ Janet Begley - Deputies order Common Core protesters off Sebastian campus - Treasure Coast Palm 6/6/13 http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2013/jun/06/deputies-order-common-core-protesters-off-campus/

⁹¹ See footnote 37.

⁹² See footnotes 24-26 and related text.

Parents are beginning to have the sense that this cartoon by Rob Smith may not be merely satire:



The good news for our children and nation is that parents, grandparents, and citizens all over Florida are standing up for educational freedom in many different ways:

- Hundreds attended a highly successful training and protest of Common Core in Orlando.
- Proponents of Common Core have been rebutted in newspaper columns, debates, and political meetings all
 over the state.
- Parents are making their way to school board meetings to ask questions about how this system will affect their
 children and in many cases are more informed about the many problems with the standards than the
 politicians and officials at the meetings.
- Websites, letter writing campaigns, and visits to officials are springing up all over Florida.
- Churches have video streamed sermons regarding Common Core and have reported over 20,000 viewers within the state of Florida.

Legislators will have to decide whom they will serve – the people who elected them or the corporate and governmental interests that support this untested, ineffective, invasive, and expensive program. Whom will they choose?

CHAPTER 5

The Effect on Teachers and the Teaching Profession

Just as many physicians are leaving the medical profession because of health care reform, finding it impossible to practice their profession without oppressive government intervention; teachers are experiencing the same types of problems under the Common Core system. Here are just a few of the many problems they are facing:

Over-Emphasis on Testing/Teaching to the Test –

Despite protestations to the contrary by Common Core proponents like former Commissioner Tony Bennett and Governor Scott that the new standards are deeper, richer, and more meaningful so as to preclude teaching to the test, there is realistically no way to avoid teaching to the test because, as discussed in Chapter 3, the stakes for test results are so high. Test scores will determine or are determining student grade advancement and graduation, teacher pay and tenure, and district funding. Teachers are realizing how much the curriculum has narrowed and how much testing time has expanded, so that they have little time to do anything else:

- "Rather than creating lifelong learners, our new goal is to create good test takers"93
- "...scripted cookie-cutter lessons aren't interested in that; the idea is that they will help students learn enough to raise their standardized test scores. Yet study after study has shown that even intense test preparation does not significantly raise test scores, and often causes stress and boredom in students. Studies have also shown that after a period of time, test scores plateau, and it is useless, even counter-productive educationally, to try to raise test scores beyond that plateau."94
- Due to all of these problems and many others related to the over-emphasis on testing, teachers and parents
 joined together in places like New York and Washington to boycott these tests, with the Seattle boycott
 resulting in suspension of the policy of requiring the tests for graduation.⁹⁵

⁹³ Stephen Round, resignation letter on video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBSqchJe2Z0&feature=youtu.be

⁹⁴Valerie Strauss - One Maddening Day working with the Common Core - The Answer Sheet, The Washington Post 3/15/2012 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/teacher-one-maddening-day-working-with-the-common-core/2012/03/15/gIQA8J4WUS_blog.html

⁹⁵ Javier Hernandez and Al Baker – A Tough New Test Spurs Protest and Tears – New York Times 4/19/13 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/19/education/common-core-testing-spurs-outrage-and-protest-among-parents.html?_r=0 and Valerie Strauss – Seattle teachers boycotting test score a victory, The Answer Sheet, The Washington Post 5/16/13 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/05/16/seattle-teachers-boycotting-test-score-a-victory/

Lack of Flexibility/Stifling Creativity -

Rather than allowing for increased innovation and creativity, teachers are finding out that they are being forced to use scripted or computerized lessons and that they are becoming little more than glorified babysitters as they monitor their students using these pre-packaged lessons. Again, although proponents like Bennett claim that local teachers will be able to choose curriculum and how it is taught, because the stakes are so high for the test results, it is highly unlikely that teachers will choose anything much beyond the national model curriculum and or the exemplars listed in the appendix of the English standards.

- "This type of total immersion is what I have always referred to as teaching 'heavy,' working hard, spending time, researching, attending to details and never feeling satisfied that I knew enough on any topic. I now find that this approach to my profession is not only devalued, but denigrated and perhaps, in some quarters despised. STEM rules the day and 'data driven' education seeks only conformity, standardization, testing and a zombie-like adherence to the shallow and generic Common Core, along with a lockstep of oversimplified so-called Essential Learnings. Creativity, academic freedom, teacher autonomy, experimentation and innovation are being stifled in a misguided effort to fix what is not broken in our system of public education..."
- "In contrast, Langford thinks teaching in Lake has become lost in requirements...'I don't feel like teachers are given that opportunity to teach, and the more I saw that, the more impassioned I became. I love home, I do. But I can't sit back...' "What we do is not a substitute for good, wholesome teaching and building teachers up to be artists and develop their artistry. The years I've spent in teaching, I've seen what it could become."
- "Another problem we found relates to the pedagogical method used in the Gettysburg Address exemplar that the Common Core calls 'cold reading.' This gives students a text they have never seen and asks them to read it with no preliminary introduction. This mimics the conditions of a standardized test on which students are asked to read material they have never seen and answer multiple choice questions about the passage. Such pedagogy makes school wildly boring. Students are not asked to connect what they read yesterday to what they are reading today, or what they read in English to what they read in science. The exemplar, in fact, forbids teachers from asking students if they have ever been to a funeral because such questions rely 'on individual experience and opinion,' and answering them 'will not move students closer to understanding the Gettysburg Address.'"98

http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/lake/os-lk-lauren-ritchie-teachers-leaving-20130707,0,3041070.column

⁹⁶ Valerie Strauss – Teacher's resignation letter: My Profession No Longer Exists – The Answer Sheet, The Washington Post http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/04/06/teachers-resignation-letter-my-profession-no-longer-exists/

 $^{^{97}}$ Lauren Ritchie – Band director moving to Connecticut says 'something terribly wrong with the system' – Orlando Sentinel 7/7/13

⁹⁸ Strauss - One Maddening Day with the Common Core - op cit

Teacher Intimidation -

It is not just urging or strong recommendation that is being used to get teachers to teach the Common Core lesson plans. Many teachers that are trying to keep their jobs have had to tell of the intimidation being used anonymously or they have quit in utter frustration:

- "And I am speaking out because I am retired. Those teachers in the school system are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out against Common Core and the policies of the District." ⁹⁹
- "The PARCC and SBAC come next fall. I am frightened for the children the onslaught of common core lock step scripted curriculum will step forward to embrace the PARCC and SBAC; the slow death of public education will speed forward quickly. The attempt to silence teachers next year will be greater, more intimidating and more punishing than we have ever seen... The teachers who understand what is happening who know common core has not been field tested, is developmentally inappropriate and is the cash cow to seal the deal on the privatization of public schools and destruction of the teaching profession..."

Unions -

The leadership of the major national teachers' unions support Common Core, or at least the concept of these standards, because they think that or are telling their membership that teachers will have flexibility and creativity to implement the standards. Both major teachers' unions have received large contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, so the leadership would be expected to be supportive.

Rank and file union members and local chapters, however, are becoming less enamored with Common Core as time goes on, as teachers are losing their jobs, or they are forced to teach according to very scripted lesson plans or just become monitors for students as they learn and are tested on computers.

There is also concern among teachers and their unions that teachers are being set up to fail by the new system in order to destroy the unions or to expand the privatization of schools via the charter and school choice movements. However, on a bipartisan basis, officials are acknowledging that professional development is not adequate enough for teachers to be held to high stakes consequences of the assessments yet as witnessed by the quotes below. These officials include Secretary Duncan, the leadership of the AFT, the Florida Republican legislative leadership, ¹⁰¹ and Democrat politicians. It is likely that the decision of the Democratic Governor Tom Corbett to delay implementation of Common Core¹⁰² via executive action was to a significant degree based on these types of concerns.

⁹⁹ Yet Another Teacher Speaks Out: a Letter to Utah Legislature – http://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com/2013/05/08/yet-another-teacher-speaks-out-a-letter-to-utah-legislature/

¹⁰⁰ Teacher Implores Other Teachers (and Parents) to Oppose Common Core http://tinyurl.com/asrcwc6

¹⁰¹ See leadership letter, op cit.

 $^{^{102}}$ Jan Murphy - Corbett orders delay in Common Core academic standards' implementation - The Patriot-News 5/20/13

- "People's World, a media outlet of organized labor, has raised concerns about the role played in Common Core adoption by Stand for Children. Although the group began with children's rights advocacy as its focus, it now pushes a corporate education agenda focused on union-busting, People's World reports. Stand for Children's donors include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, New Profit Inc. and the Walton Family Foundation."¹⁰³
- "When states and districts get the alignment right moving from standards to curriculum to classrooms, to feedback and improvement—student success will follow. But until then, a moratorium on stakes is the only sensible course." Randi Weingarten, president of AFT, in speech calling for moratorium on CCSS implementation of high stakes consequences (4/30/13). 104

Problems with Inadequate or Inappropriate Professional Development -

Although some, like the Common Core proponent group Chiefs for Change that includes former Commissioner Tony Bennett, would say that teachers' concerns about inadequate teacher preparation are only to avoid accountability, it is obvious from these quotes, the above discussion of unions, and the disastrous attempt at Common Core assessment implementation in New York and Kentucky this past spring, that teacher professional development is sadly lacking as Common Core is being implemented. Students were tested on items that were never taught and for which teachers were not prepared. It is little wonder that so many teachers are leaving the students and the profession that they love.

- "Common Core's ELA standards will entail drastic costs in order to change academic coursework, professional preparation programs, and professional development for prospective or current English teachers". English teachers will need a significant amount of professional development to teach reading drawn from other subjects, something which even secondary reading teachers are not prepared to do, given their lack of background in content areas. This is an enormous waste of time and money that will result in poorer reading and writing by students as well as a widening of the demographic gaps." 105
- "William McCallum of the University of Arizona, who co-wrote the Common Core math standards, says, 'Implementation is everything... Preparation of teachers...is crucial.' But what McCallum deems as 'crucial' is being treated as 'optional' in too many systems and by too many policymakers – including the federal government, which is spending \$350 million on new high-stakes tests aligned to the CCSS but nothing specifically targeted to prepare teachers." 106

¹⁰³ Andrea Neal – Left, right unite against Common Core – Indianapolis Star 3/19/13 http://www.indystar.com/article/20130319/OPINION/303190058/Left-right-unite-against-Common-Core

¹⁰⁴ Valerie Strauss – AFT's Weingarten Urges Moratorium on High Stakes Linked to New Standardized Tests – The Answer Sheet, Washington Post 4/30/13 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/04/30/afts-weingarten-urges-moratorium-on-high-stakes-linked-to-new-standardized-tests/

¹⁰⁵ Stotsky - Colorado testimony - op cit.

¹⁰⁶ Strauss - Weingarten - op cit.

Data Collection on Teachers -

Teachers are discovering, much to their chagrin, that data collection on them and every aspect of how they teach is becoming as extensive as it is on their students.

The Data Quality Campaign for teacher data is currently tracking whether a state has a "teacher of record definition"; whether the "state's teacher-student data link can connect more than one educator to a particular student in a given course", the state has in place a process for "teacher roster verification"; and whether the state "collects data linking teachers and students multiple times per year." Florida said "yes" to all four questions. ¹⁰⁷ This means that teachers are being held accountable for the test results for individual students on standards they had little or no involvement in developing and that they must teach, regardless of their professional opinion on whether they are helpful for children and how they should be taught.

Just as data is extensively collected on students, there is a long list of data elements, including many that are non-academic, collected on teachers, as evidenced by the National Center for Education Statistics Data Handbook: 108

Medical Examination Results

Additional Health Data and Medical Condition

Religious Consideration

Dental Screening

Related Travel Activities

Other Interests

Community Services Type

Staff Evaluation or Rating

Perceived Harmful Effects on Early Childhood Teaching and Learning

More than 500 early childhood professionals opposed the Common Core by signing *The Joint Statement of Early Childhood Health and Education Professionals on the Common Core Standards Initiative* that contains these four important points:¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Analysis of State Promising Practices in Defining Teacher of Record and Linking Teachers & Students based on 2011 data http://dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Analysis%20of%20State%20Promising%20Practices%20in%20TOR%20and%20TSDL%202012.pdf, p. 4 last accessed 8/2/13

¹⁰⁸ NCES Data Handbook, op cit.

¹⁰⁹Valerie Strauss - A Tough Critique of Common Core on Early Childhood Education - The Answer Sheet, Washington Post 1/29/13 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/01/29/a-tough-critique-of-common-core-on-early-childhood-education/

- 1. The K-3 standards will lead to long hours of direct instruction in literacy and math. This kind of "drill and grill" teaching has already pushed active, play-based learning out of many kindergartens.
- 2. The standards will intensify the push for more standardized testing, which is highly unreliable for children under age eight.
- 3. Didactic instruction and testing will crowd out other crucial areas of young children's learning: active, hands-on exploration, and developing social, emotional, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills—all of which are difficult to standardize or measure but are the essential building blocks for academic and social accomplishment and responsible citizenship.
- 4. There is little evidence that standards for young children lead to later success. The research is inconclusive; many countries with top-performing high-school students provide rich play-based, nonacademic experiences—not standardized instruction—until age six or seven.

Conclusion

It is little wonder that the Common Core system – especially the high stakes assessments – is now facing bipartisan opposition across the nation and, specifically, in the Florida Legislature as witnessed by this excerpt from the previously mentioned legislative leadership to now former Commissioner Bennett strongly urging him to develop Florida based assessments to implement the Common Core standards:

"As we recently discussed, Florida is at a decision point regarding the direction our state will choose in implementing assessments proposed by the national academic consortium, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Like you, we, along with our fellow legislators, have gathered information and heard constituent questions and concerns about national standards and assessments and their impact on students, teachers, schools and our state's competitiveness.

After consulting with bipartisan leadership of the Senate and House committees on education policy and appropriations, we are troubled by serious issues in connection with PARCC..."¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Leadership letter, op cit.

CHAPTER 6

The Cost to Implement Common Core Standards

Based on data from several sources, the Common Core standards and accompanying tests will be very expensive – both to implement and to maintain.

Florida is projected by the Pioneer Institute to spend \$1,024,163,000 to pay for testing, technology, textbooks, and professional development in what they characterize as a "middle of the road" estimate¹¹¹ compared to \$905,838,000 in grants received, leaving at least \$118,325,000 in costs to Florida taxpayers just for implementation.

Given that former Commissioner Bennett and the State Board of Education (SBOE) originally asked for \$442 million in one year ¹¹² to implement assessments, which is more than what Florida has already spent on the FCAT between 1996¹¹³ and 2008 combined, that \$118 million amount might well be low and will serve as a huge unfunded mandate to already strapped county districts. Marion County has had to lay off 160 teachers, ¹¹⁴ and Charlotte County was forced to discontinue physical education classes until parental outrage and funding shifts reversed that decision ¹¹⁵ as costs for Common Core implementation continue to mount.

Even more concerning is that Bennett changed his education budget request to \$100 million in the middle of the legislative session. This constitutes a \$342 million swing, 116 indicates enormous credibility problems, and appears to be an effort to hide the true costs of this capaciously expensive system. In addition, the commissioner later said that Florida may consider some other completely different testing scheme at an unknown cost, even though Florida is the fiscal agent for PARCC. 117

¹¹¹ Pioneer Institute – National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards – February, 2012, http://pioneerinstitute.org/?wpdmdl=7& and Henry Burke – States - States ' Taxpayers Cannot Afford Common Core Standards – 10/12/2012 https://educationviews.org/states-taxpayers-cannot-afford-common-core-standards/

¹¹² Orlando Sentinel – Education leaders worry schools won't be ready for new standards – 2/18/13 http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2013-02-18/features/os-schools-common-core-technology-20130218 1 new-standards-new-tests-florida-schools

^{113 &}quot;The Financial Cost of the FCAT," at http://fcat.fldoe.org/pdf/FinCostofFCAT.pdf (2/17/11)

 $^{^{114}}$ Marion County laying off 261 school employees – WESH.com 5/31/13 $\frac{\text{http://www.wesh.com/news/central-florida/marion-county-laying-off-261-school-employees/-/}{11788162/20378084/-/wfu0tq/-/index.html}$

¹¹⁵ Ashley Smith - Charlotte County School District goes from grim to grins - News-Press.com 7/30/13 http://www.news-press.com/article/20130730/NEWS0104/307300040/Charlotte-County-School-District-goes-from-grim-grins

 $^{^{116}}$ John O'Connor – Florida Department of Education Overestimated Budget Request By \$342 Million – NPR State Impact 4/16/13

¹¹⁷ John O'Connor - Bennett: PARCC Is Not The Only Exam Florida Will Consider - NPR State Impact 4/24/13 http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/2013/04/24/bennett-florida-not-committed-to-parcc-exam/

Just after the previously mentioned legislative leadership letter raised the concern about the testing costs being "indeterminate," PARCC recently stated that the testing cost for Florida will be slightly less than it is now, with the most recent cost data for FCAT being \$30.59 per student in 2011-12¹¹⁸ and the estimated cost for PARCC at \$29.50 per student. However, PARCC states that "the cost projections for the PARCC tests will continue to be refined over time as the development of the tests continues, including as technology for automated scoring continues to improve since it will be possible to achieve greater cost savings when the scoring of student essays can be automated." However, it is important to remember that costs for government programs rarely decrease. It is also important to note that the automated scoring of essays has been so problematic for Kentucky, which is a PARCC state, that they have decided to exclude essay questions as part of their accountability testing altogether, returning to only multiple choice, machine scored questions. Having machine scored essay questions was supposed to be one of the marquis features of PARCC and SBAC. This begs the question – why should any state change their testing system if new tests are no different than the old ones?

In addition, Indiana and Kentucky, both PARCC states, had significant technical problems administering online tests to the point that hundreds, if not thousands of tests may need to be invalidated. ¹²¹ This does not bode well for Common Core test implementation in a state as large as Florida.

Georgia just recently pulled out of the PARCC assessment consortium due to a doubling of their testing costs and a lack of bandwidth. Arizona has reported that their testing costs will be fifty percent higher for the PARCC assessments, which does not concern the Arizona Department of Education, but does concern the chairwoman of the House Education Committee, where funding decisions begin. 123

South Carolina Senator Mike Fair cites data that testing cost could increase from \$12/student to \$100/student¹²⁴ in that state which is a member of the other testing consortium called SBAC. Both PARCC & SBAC require multiple computerized assessments during one school year.

¹¹⁸Florida Department of Education – FCAT 2.0—Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® 2.0 – See question 24. http://www.fldoe.org/faq/default.asp?Dept=179&ID=1439

¹¹⁹ PARCC – Frequently Asked Questions About the Costs of the PARCC Tests – July 2013 http://ca539dfd55636c55e922-fd4c048d1c793e15a27f954b34a49d25.r49.cf1.rackcdn.com/CostFAQs07-22-13.pdf

 $^{^{120}\}mbox{Logan Morford}$ – News Release: Kentucky's common-core testing program hits major snag – Bluegrass Institute 5/3/13

http://www.bipps.org/news-release-kentuckys-common-core-testing-program-hits-major-snag/

 $^{^{121}}$ Michelle Davis – States' Online Testing Problems Raise Common–Core Concerns – Education Week 5/3/13, updated 5/7/13

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/05/03/30testing.h32.html?tkn=PNVFto01Wv %2FyUQV1S5V24FoupcTNKSfvlF9i&cmp=clp-edweek

¹²² Wayne Washington – Georgia decides against offering 'Common Core' standardized test – Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/22/13 http://www.ajc.com/news/news/news/breaking-news/georgia-decides-against-offering-common-core-stand/nyzDr/

¹²³ Shane Vanderhart – Arizona Tests Costs Jump 50% Under PARCC – Truth in American Education 7/26/13 http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-assessments/arizona-tests-costs-jump-50-under-parcc/

¹²⁴ Senator Mike Fair - op cit.

The state of New York is already much further down the road in implementing Common Core standards and the aligned assessments. According to a research brief¹²⁵ from the State University of New York at New Paltz, costs are far exceeding grants and there are many other problems:

"In six Rockland County districts, leaders projected a total four-year cost of almost \$11 million. This compares with an aggregate revenue of about \$400K in Race to the Top funding – a \$10 million deficit representing an increase in average per pupil spending for this single initiative of nearly \$400 per student.

In a sample of eighteen Lower Hudson school districts, the aggregate cost just to get ready for the first year of RTTT in September 2012 was \$6,472,166, while the aggregate funding was \$520,415. These districts had to make up a cost differential of \$5,951,751 with local taxpayer dollars...

Much is being sacrificed to meet this expensive mandate in the context of the state's newly enacted tax cap, including: teacher and staff cuts resulting in increased class sizes; redirected priorities and unmet facilities' needs; diminishing professional development; a narrowing of curriculum; and sacrificed leadership in curriculum development and non-traditional approaches.

New York's leaders still have the opportunity to change its course before its school systems are radically and unalterably changed, perhaps for the worse, and at a great short and long-term financial loss to all taxpayers."

Charlotte County Superintendent Douglas Whitaker said at a Common Core workshop that was protested by citizens, "How do we get the state to move away from the obsession on tests and test design (and) the incredible amount of money that has been spent on that?" ¹²⁶

Because there was no real cost analysis done of the expense of implementation and long-term use of the Common Core standards, tests, and data collection system, two states (Indiana and Michigan) have paused implementation to look at that issue among others.

Florida's newly signed education budget law containing the implementation schedule for the Common Core assessments mandates that the State Board of Education (SBOE) develop an implementation schedule that is based on "funding, sufficient field and baseline data, access to assessments, instructional alignment, and school district readiness to administer the common core assessments online." It is impossible for the SBOE to develop that implementation schedule based on "funding" when there has been no cost analysis and the estimates from the state vary so wildly.

As Florida deals with many other costly issues such as health care and immigration, it should require both a short and long-term fiscal analysis before proceeding any farther with implementation of the Common Core.

¹²⁵ Kenneth Mitchell, Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents – Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach State University of New York at New Paltz – Federal Mandates on Local Education: Costs and Consequences – Yes, it's a Race, but is it in the Right Direction? – Discussion Brief #8 – fall 2012, p. 2 http://www.newpaltz.edu/crreo/brief-8 education.pdf

¹²⁶ Kreger, op cit.

¹²⁷ Chapter No. <u>2013-27</u>, op cit.

CHAPTER 7

The Effect on Private, Religious, and Home Schools

Common Core proponents have repeatedly communicated that the Common Core standards will not be a requirement for private, religious, or home schools. The following are problematic areas of concern that could diminish or, in the future, eliminate these alternative methods of education, impeding parental control.

The Common Core standards drive a national curriculum and a national test

The proponents' argument that is commonly communicated is "it's just standards;" yet the standards drive the curriculum in the same sense that, to duplicate a cake, one must have the recipe. Students will not be able to score high on the assessment test without using model curriculum. "As part of its proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) committed to developing model content frameworks for mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) to serve as a bridge between the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments." The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSDLA) along with Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA), strongly oppose Common Core standards because of the injurious effect that it will have on parents' ability to home school their children. "HSLDA has been fighting national standards for decades, and we believe that the **Common Core State Standards Initiative is national standards** merely by a different name." (Emphasis added.)

Private Schools will be required to implement Common Core standards if they receive revenue from vouchers

A drive by Governor Rick Scott has been made that, in order to accept school vouchers (which many private schools do), the school must implement Common Core standards. Governor Scott stated that "all schools receiving public funding—including private schools accepting voucher-bearing students—should be held to the same standard." The Tampa Bay Times reported the Governor's further comments:

"Noting Florida's shift to new, national Common Core standards, Scott said Wednesday that traditional, charter and private schools should expect to implement the new testing that comes with it. 'Ultimately, everybody is going to Common Core,' he said at a reception in Tampa for administrators of the scholarships and student recipients." 131

¹²⁸PARCC Model Frameworks, http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks

¹²⁹ William A. Estrada, Esq., Common Core State Standards Initiative: National Education Standards 2.0, March 31,2010, http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/201003310.asp

¹³⁰ Rick Scott, December 12, 2012

¹³¹Tia Mitchell, Gov. Rick Scott Advocates for voucher Students at Private Schools, Dec. 13, 2012, http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/the-buzz-florida-politics/content/gov-rick-scott-advocates-testing-voucher-students-private-schools

Other States are Trying to Directly Impose Common Core on Home and Private School Students via State Testing

Current or proposed statutes or regulations from Alabama, Missouri, and Oklahoma have all made the effort to require the statewide Common Core aligned national tests on private or home schooled students. ¹³²

Common Core Creates an Uneven Playing Field with Private/Home Schools -

College entrance exams are now aligning with these Common Core standards. Though Common Core proponents are stating that the standards are voluntary for private and home schools, in order for students to receive college grant funding, student loans, and entrance into public universities, they must score high on the these Common Core aligned assessments. Private colleges and universities, including religious colleges, will also have to align themselves with Common Core if they accept student grant money. This places students at a great financial disadvantage if they have not been "educated" to the national standards, curriculum, and assessments. Private and home school children will be required to study for the standardized tests in order to be competitive with other students. It also creates challenges for students seeking to transfer credits between private and public schools, as well as between home schools and public schools. Students who do not graduate from a Common Core standards school will likely be put at a great disadvantage over a student who came from an "approved school." This "approved school" concept will alter a school's accreditation process.

The Cost of Private and Home Schools to Provide the Technology for PARCC Curriculum and Assessments is Unattainable –

The cost to bring private and home schools in line with technology-based assessments without state and federal funding could make these alternative education sources no longer financially feasible.

Common Core Standards Will Create Normalcy with Societal Issues

Controversial, societal norms will substantially influence a national curriculum, which would, in turn, influence the values and beliefs within the teaching and learning process. This was clearly seen within the new Common Core curriculum being implemented by creating assumptive language throughout the textbooks and assessments that are clearly not relevant to the subject matter.

"...This wholesale redevelopment of curricula has given a fresh opportunity for the education elite that has embraced a nihilistic secular humanistic worldview to spread their message. Not surprisingly then, those who are in the business of selling curricula to public schools trying to meet the new Common Core Standards may also take advantage of the change to put in content that we as Christians find objectionable." 133

¹³² http://www.missourieducationwatchdog.com/2013/08/another-assault-on-homeschoolers-this.html

¹³³ http://www.mache.org/blog/2378/04-07-2013/understanding-common-core-standards-homeschool-perspective

Conclusion

With over 330,000 students attending private schools and over 70,000¹³⁴ students that are home schooled in the state of Florida, parents, educators, and churches who have religious schools, are becoming outspoken and organized in their opposition to the implementation of Common Core standards along with the effects it will have on children. Many private school associations as well as home school associations such as Florida Parent Educators Association (the largest home school organization in the country), and Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) have come out strongly against Common Core.

134 http://teaching.about.com/od/ProfilesInEducation/a/Florida-Education.htm